

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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R 261811Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5496
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - A L L I N F O A D D R E S S E E S A D D E D

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, MR, SP
SUBJECT: MAURITANIAN DEVELOPMENTS

REF: MADRID 8390, 7931

1. PEDRO LOPEZ AGUIRREBENGOA, MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS, TOLD POLITICAL COUNSELOR JULY 26 THAT THE GOS HAD INFORMATION THAT THE MAURITANIAN MINISTER OF JUSTICE HAS RECENTLY VISITED KUWAIT IN ORDER TO URGE THE KUWAITIS TO USE THEIR INFLUENCE WITH THE MOROCCANS TO ENCOURAGE A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THE MAURITANIAN DILEMMA

2. LOPEZ ALSO SAID THAT BUCKRAISS, A MEMBER OF THE MAURITANIAN RULING COUNCIL, DEPARTED NOUAKCHOTT FOR TRIPOLI JULY 25 AND WAS CURRENTLY IN LIBYA, PRESUMABLY TO ASK THE LIBYANS TO USE THEIR GOOD OFFICES TO ACHIEVE A SETTLEMENT OF THE PROBLEM. LOPEZ DESCRIBED BUCKRAISS AS CONFIDENTIAL

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A SAHRAWI AND AS A MEMBER OF THE "RADICAL" WING WITHIN MAURITANIAN RULING CIRCLES. LOPEZ SAID FURTHER THAT IT WAS HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT THE LIBYAN AMBASSADOR IN NOUAKCHOTT OFFERED LIBYAN ASSISTANCE IN ACHIEVING A SETTLEMENT TO THE MAURITANIANS SHORTLY AFTER THE COUP AND THAT THIS WAS INITIALLY REFUSED BY THE GOM.

3. BASED ON THEIR OWN CONVERSATIONS WITH THE MOROCCANS, LOPEZ CONTINUED, IT WAS EVIDENT THAT RABAT REGARDED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SEPARATE GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY IN THE SAHARA AS A SECURITY MATTER, RATHER THAN A TERRITORIAL ONE. IT IS IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND, HE SAID, THAT MAJOR ELEMENTS OF THE POLISARIO DERIVE FROM THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION IN MOROCCO. HASSAN WOULD FIGHT TO THE DEATH TO KEEP SUCH PEOPLE FROM CONTROLLING A STATE WHICH STOOD BETWEEN MOROCCO AND BLACK AFRICA.

4. THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM IS MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN ANIMOSITY, LOPEZ SAID. GIVEN THE HATRED THAT EXISTS BETWEEN THE LEADERS OF BOTH COUNTRIES, IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW A PEACEFUL SOLUTION CAN BE ARRIVED AT. EXPRESSING WHAT HE CALLED A PERSONAL OPINION, LOPEZ SAID THAT THE ONLY HOPE WAS PRESSURE FROM THE OUTSIDE, ESPECIALLY BY THE SUPERPOWERS, WHICH WOULD FORCE THE NATIONS OF THE AREA TO ACHIEVE SOME SORT OF SOLUTION BASED ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SAHRAWI GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY WITHIN THE BORDERS OF THE MAURITANIAN SAHARA, ONE THAT IS NOT ENTIRELY CONTROLLED BY THE POLISARIO.

5. ASKED WHETHER THERE HAD BEEN ANY MOVEMENT ON SPANISH EFFORTS TO HOLD A CONFERENCE OF INTERESTED PARTIES REGARDING THE SAHARA (REFTELS), LOPEZ REPLIED THAT SINCE WE LAST TALKED THE ALGERIANS HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE

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GOS TO URGE THAT SPANISH EFFORTS IN THIS REGARD BE CONTINUED. HOWEVER, THEY DID NOT IN ANY WAY CHANGE THEIR PRECONDITIONS FOR ATTENDING SUCH A CONFERENCE, WHICH WERE UNACCEPTABLE TO THE MOROCCANS. FURTHERMORE, LOPEZ OBSERVED THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW UN SECGEN WALDHEIM COULD CONTINUE TO COOPERATE IN PROMOTING SUCH A CONFERENCE AFTER THE RECENT RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE OAU WHICH CALLED FOR A FIVE-NATION AFRICAN COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE AND ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE. IN THIS CONTEXT, LOPEZ REPEATED EARLIER ASSURANCES THAT THE SPANISH WOULD BE WILLING TO DO ANYTHING THEY COULD TO ASSIST IN ACHIEVING A SETTLEMENT. TODMAN

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